

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 01781 131306Z

53

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LONDON POUCH BELFAST

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS EI UK

SUBJ: O CONAILL AGAIN DISCLAIMS BIRMINGHAM BOMBINGS

REF: DUBLIN 1731

1. LOCAL PAPERS REPORT INTERVIEW WHICH IRA CHIEF-OF-STAFF DAITHI O CONAILL GAVE TO GERMAN MAGAZINE "STERN." SUBSTANCE IS SIMILAR TO O CONAILL'S EARLIER INTERVIEW IN DUBLIN SUNDAY PRESS (REFTEL), BUT EVEN STRONGER IN ITS CONDEMNATION OF BIRMINGHAM BOMBINGS. HE CALLED ATTACKS LIKE THOSE IN BIRMINGHAM "MURDER." IRA, HE INSISTED, GIVES THIRTY-MINUTE WARNING FOR ANY ATTACK ON NON-MILITARY INSTALLATIONS, SO THAT NO INNOCENT CIVILIANS ARE ENDANGERED. O CONAILL SAID THAT IF IRA MEMBERS HAD CARRIED OUT BIRMINGHAM ATTACKS THEY COULD BE COURT-MARTIALLED AND COULD FACE DEATH PENALTY. HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT IRA HAD NOT CARRIED OUT LAST JULY'S BLAST AT TOWER OF LONDON. HE SPECULATED THAT BRITISH BOMBINGS MIGHT HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT BY A LOCAL ANARCHIST GROUP.

2. IN SAME INTERVIEW, O CONAILL REFERRED TO BRITISH DEBATE ON DEATH PENALTY AND SAID THAT IRA WOULD HANG TWO BRITISH SOLDIERS

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PAGE 02 DUBLIN 01781 131306Z

FOR EVERY ONE OF ITS MEMBERS EXECUTED IN BRITAIN.

3. COMMENT: ALLOWING FOR SOME POSSIBLE TRANSLATION PROBLEMS, IT DOES SEEM CLEAR THAT O CONAILL STRONGLY DISAPPROVES OF BRITISH BOMBINGS AGAINST CIVILIAN TARGETS. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT MOST LIKELY EXPLANATION OF WHAT IS HAPPENING IS THAT "REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT" IS NO LONGER COORDINATED. LOCAL CONTACTS WHO TRY TO FOLLOW THESE MATTERS BELIEVE BRITISH BOMBINGS MAY HAVE BEEN ORDERED BY NI PROVOS, SUCH AS KEVIN MALLON.

4. O CONAILL'S THREAT AGAINST CAPITAL PUNISHMENT WAS NEATLY TIMED TO INFLUENCE WESTMINSTER DEBATE. SEEMS LIKELY THAT HE WANTED TO ANGER BRITISH INTO A RETURN TO DEATH PENALTY. FORTUNATELY, THIS ALSO SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CLEAR TO A MAJORITY OF BRITISH MP'S. A FEW NEW PROVO MARTYRS WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE USEFUL TO THEIR CAMPAIGN THAN "MILITARY" SUCCESSES.
MOORE

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